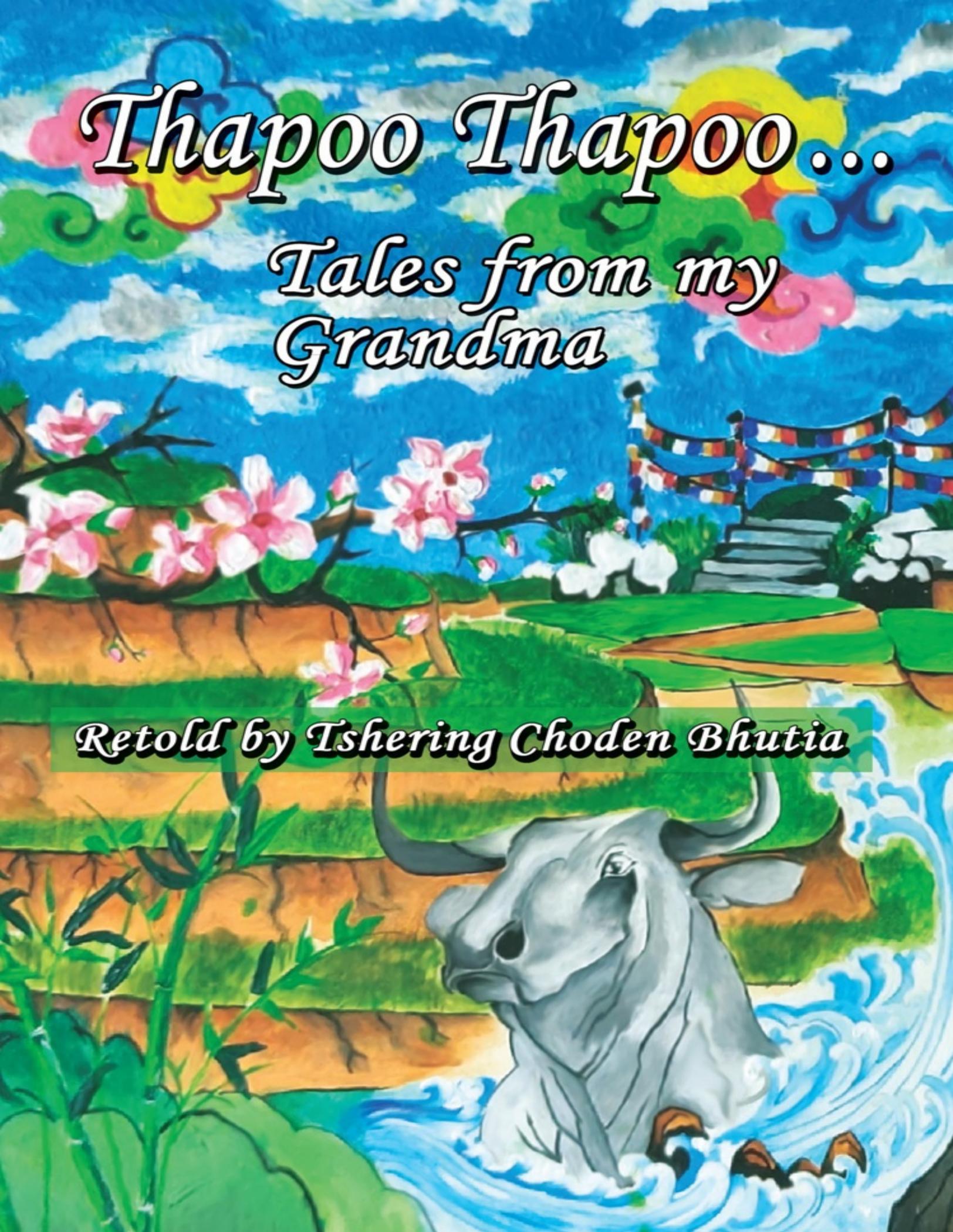


Thapoo Thapoo...

Tales from my Grandma

Retold by Tshering Choden Bhutia



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Mr. Folong Tha¹

*Thapoo Thapoo*², as my grandma used to say, there was a beautiful Kingdom called '*Simchey-Nachey*'. A variety of birds and animals lived in the kingdom. The King of Simchey-Nachey was a great lion called the *Gyalpo*³ *Singhi*⁴, who ruled over the different species of animals.

One day, the Gyalpo Singhi, decided that he wanted to review the administration of his kingdom. For that purpose, he summoned every living creature of his kingdom at his palace. Accordingly, different animals and birds gathered around at his palace.

When all the birds and animals of the kingdom gathered, the Gyalpo Singhi announced, that for the ease of administration, to understand the needs of the various subjects and also for the revenue collection, he wished them to be divided into two categories/sections.

He ordered his ministers to conduct a survey and categorize his subjects under either of the two heads:

1. *Zya Yul*—Birds.
2. *Dthue dro*—Land Animals.

Next morning, the Ministers and his survey troupe started with their assigned duty. The Ministers sent two groups of a surveyor and his tax collector for the field visit.

One group would collect the tax for the Birds Category and the other group would collect taxes for the land animal category. The two groups start visiting the subjects of *Simchey-Nachey*, one household at a time.

After visiting many households, the Minister's first survey troupe—*Zya Yul*, reach the residence of the Bats. The leader of their household was one Mr. Folong Tha. He lived in his beautiful house with his family. The tax collector approaches Mr. Folong Tha and asks him to deposit his tax. The astute Mr. Folong Tha, pauses for a while, shows his sharp white

tooth and answers,

“Ngacha Zya Yul gi mey, Ngacha Dthue Dro gi Simchey bey.”

- But we are not from the Bird’s category; we belong to the Land animal category.”

Hearing this and staring at the bats sharp teeth, the tax collector exclaims,

“Oh! Well in that case, the other group will approach you for your taxes.” Saying this they leave for the next household.

The next day, the second survey troupe—*Dthue dro* reaches the Bat’s residence. As directed by the *Gyalpo Singhi*, the tax collector asks the bat leader to deposit his tax. The astute Mr. Folong Tha, pauses for a while, flaps his dark wide wings and says,

“Nacha Dthue Dro gi Simchey mey, Ngacha Zya Yul gi bey.”

- But we are not from Land animal’s category; we belong to the Birds category.”

The tax collector stares at the bat’s wide wings and exclaims, “Oh! in that case, the other group will approach you for your taxes.” Saying this they leave.



Folong Tha

The next morning the tax collectors of both the groups report about the confusion created by Folong Tha to the Gyalpo Singhi. They mention how the tax collection amongst all the subjects was successful except for Mr. Folong Tha who craftily claims to belong to the other group when approached by both the Minister's tax collection troupe.

Hearing this, the Gyalpo Singhi becomes furious and summons Mr. Folong Tha to his court. The Gyalpo Singhi's court was attended by all members of the animal Kingdom of Simchey-Nachey. Mr. Folong Tha appears before the King's court along with his Bat family.

"Mr. Folong Tha", The Gyalpo Singhi remarks, "You have defaulted in the payment of the taxes. Is this true"?

"Yes, it is. Your Majesty", Folong Tha replies with a trembling voice and bowed head.

The Gyapo Singhi further yells at the Bat, "You have not just defaulted in the payment of the taxes but also lied to my Officers. You told the officer of the first group that you belong to the Animal category and the officer of the second group that you belong to the Bird Category. You being a bird, deny being one and all for an ill motive."

As a punishment to the tax evasion and for lying to the officers of the King, and having denied to belonging to the Bird's Category, the Gyalpo Singhi in the presence of all the animals of the Kingdom of Simchey-Nachey, banishes Mr. Folong Tha and his family members from the Bird's society.

Ashamed Mr. Folong Tha, cannot bear the humiliation and the punishment. All of his fellow bird friends and relatives starts to avoid him and hates him for not accepting the clan that he belonged to. Feeling outcast, Mr. Folong Tha decides to leave his beautiful home and starts hiding in dark caves. From that day onwards, the Bats family has started to live in dark places.

For having denied his roots, Mr. Folong Tha lost his own identity.



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